

19 DEAD IN TENEMENT FIRE.

TARDY ALARM, SCUTTLE LOCKED, FIRE ESCAPES CLOGGED.

Man Who Saw Blaze Lost 12 Minutes Telephoning Fire Headquarters—People Dead or Dying When Engines Arrived—Couple's Brave Fight to Save House.

Over a hundred persons huddled into one of those human hives of the East Side at 330 Allen street, were awakened by a fire at 3:30 yesterday morning. Nineteen lost their lives in the frantic fight for life that followed, thirteen of the dead being children. About twenty persons were injured, four of whom may die.

It was at least twelve minutes after the fire started before an alarm was turned in by a policeman. The firemen, from Chief Croker down, said that had the alarm been turned in sooner undoubtedly more lives could have been saved. Over in that district there have been less policemen watching the tenements at night since the three platform system went into effect and some were away on strike duty. How many policemen were on duty in the Eldridge street precinct in the early morning hour when the fire started Commissioner McClellan refused to say yesterday. There was one report that only eight men were turned out at midnight, but it could not be verified. One sergeant said he thought there were a few more, but not many.

"The people who lost their lives were dead before a gong sounded in an engine house," said Battalion Chief Lucas, the first fireman to reach the fire.

Just how long the building burned before the alarm is uncertain. Henry Biber, who has a store at 142 Eldridge street, directly in the rear, was awakened by the glare of the flames. They were coming out of the windows of the first floor then. Biber thought that the proper thing to do was to call up Fire Headquarters on his telephone. He says that he was just twelve minutes getting Central to give him the call. His number is 1337 R Orchard.

When he left his telephone the flames were pouring out of all the windows in the rear and the fire escapes were crowded with people fighting for their lives some of them with their night clothing afire.

Isaac Davis, who lives in a store in the basement and sells grape juice, had discovered the fire before Biber, but he gave no alarm. Davis, returning from work, found a lot of stuff ablaze in the sink in the hall. It was in a large funnel. He threw his overcoat over the sink, but the overcoat caught fire. Then he picked up the blazing funnel and started for the yard. His hands were burned and he dropped it near the door, just where the draught could catch the flame and send it up the flimsy stairway. His wife made one last desperate effort even then to avert the catastrophe by throwing a bucket of water on the flames. Davis got his family out of the house and spent the rest of the time in screaming.

Up the stairways and the two narrow airshafts rushed the flames and out of their little rooms tumbled the people. Many made for the fire escapes on the front and rear. On them they crowded, and in violation of the law. When escape was cut off by the stairs many rushed up to the scuttles, only to find it fastened and bolted. What they did then is not known.

Underneath that scuttle were found ten bodies, most of them children.

Two policemen saved the fire and turned in alarm at the same time from different corners. According to the firemen, when they started out from their engine houses, they found the fire.

Had such a headway then that the sky was red. John J. Dwan, one of the policemen, got to the building before the firemen and worked hard saving the women and children, until he finally tumbled off the third floor fire escape to the ground, broke his collarbone and was carried away unconscious.

The firemen pulled people off the fire escapes, many of them with their clothing afire. High up on the fire escapes the flames mushroomed out, and it was impossible to save some, and three members of the Solomon family, a mother and her two sons, were burned to death. The firemen's eyes. The firemen arrived too late to get inside the building at all.

Chief Croker said:

"The fire escapes are filled with household effects, which is against the law. The police and the Tenement House Department have had them cleared again and again, but the law requires that the people fill them up. The only way to stop it is to bring the landlords to court."

Tenement House Commissioner Crain said that a violation had been placed on the building in December because one fire escape was found to have an aperture of 11 inches where the law requires 12. An inspector was sent afterward to see if this had been changed. His report couldn't be found yesterday. Mr. Crain said he would investigate.

There are 55,000 tenements in New York and there are 100 inspectors. You can judge what can be done," he said.

Corner Goldenskrantz said that the fire was apparently caused by some one leaving a lighted match, candle or lamp in the sink, which was filled with grease from a restaurant. He said he had failed to find any criminal negligence.

The burned tenement was leased by Mrs. Celia Lerner of 171 Forsyth street from Morris Weinstein of 35 Nassau street, who owns it. There were twenty-two families as tenants. Mrs. Lerner said that she had many times been told by the fire department that the fire escapes were clear and had ordered things removed many times.

The only recent complaint was in regard to whitewashing the airshaft.

"My orders to the janitor," said Mrs. Lerner, "were to see that the fire escapes were unlocked before he went to bed. I cannot understand how it came to be fastened unless some painter who were there yesterday fastened it to keep their paints from being stolen."

The list of dead follows:

IDENTIFIED.

Pucha, Gertrude, 30 years old.
Kaufmann, Harry, 10 years old.
Kohn, Mrs. Sarah, 10 years old.
Kohn, Joseph, 12 years old.
Miller, Morris, 8 years old.
Miller, Rosie, 4 years old.
Mushkowitz, Ida, 10 years old.
Solomon, Joseph, 16 years old.
Solomon, Isaac, 15 years old.
Solomon, a child, 4 years old.
Wiener, Mrs. Rose, 23 years old.
Wiener, Sander, 4 years old.
Zelizer, Harry, 40 years old.
Zelizer, Mrs. Bella, 30 years old.
Zelizer, Harry, 11 years old.
Zelizer, Rachel, 13 years old.

UNIDENTIFIED.

Two girls, thought to be Clara and Elsie Ginsberg, aged 17 and 13.
Unknown boy.

MAYOR DEMANDS A REPORT.

Has Been Looking Over East Side Himself—Reminds Them Crain May Go.

When Mayor McClellan heard yesterday of the statements made by Chief Croker that the loss of so many lives in the Allen street fire was due to the clogging of the

Established 1890

130 Varieties

ESTERBROOK'S Steel Pens

Sold Everywhere

The Best Pens Made

fire escapes he directed Tenement House Commissioner T. C. Crain to make a report explaining why the law was so flagrantly violated. It was rumored at the City Hall that the Mayor was so incensed that it was his intention to ask Mr. Crain to resign.

If the Mayor has any such intention he would not admit it. He said only that he meant to make an investigation of his own as to the way in which the Tenement House law was being enforced.

It is known that the Mayor has for some time been dissatisfied with the Tenement House Department. From time to time in the last few months there have been reports that Mr. Crain would be called upon to resign because of complaints which reached the Mayor from ex-Commissioner De Forest and others of lax administration. The Mayor has invariably, when these reports got afloat, denied that he contemplated removing Mr. Crain, but it came out yesterday that he had made a trip through the lower East Side a few days ago and that conditions that he saw there had drawn from him some caustic comments on the work of the Tenement House Department. It is said that the Mayor was heard to remark that it might be advisable for him to change the make-up of the department.

Mr. Crain's friends said yesterday that he had been hampered by the incompetency or worse of many of the inspectors of his department.

KATZ MUTTER WANTS ALIMONY.

Kaiser Prefers the Island to a Home With Midnight Serenaders.

From the time that Hans Kaiser left the fatherland he was entirely happy until about five years ago, when he met a lady from Kilkenny. His hours were long—he went to work in a malt house in East Forty-seventh street at 4 o'clock in the morning and kept at it until 6 at night—but he had plenty of sleep and food and beer. In a mood which he cannot now explain, even in German, he married the lady from Kilkenny and began an unhappy experience with the product that made Kilkenny famous.

It fairly rained cats in Hans's household. His wife had a mania for them, and any strange cat of color or low descent was sure of a welcome at her hands. Their apartments were small, but the woman found room in them for fifty cats, and they had the matter at the house.

Hans found that the cats could not be broken of their nightly serenades. They would not all stop singing together, so he began to sing to them, and he sang and lost his job. As he couldn't induce his wife to live with less than thirty cats, he left her.

That was two years ago. Until yesterday Mrs. Kaiser was happy with her cats, and Hans without them. Then she suddenly belated Hans before Magistrate O'Brien in Yorkville police court on a charge of abandonment. The Magistrate ruled that Hans must support his wife, cats or no cats.

"You must either live with her or pay her \$3 a week for her support," said the Magistrate.

Hans refused to do either and in the afternoon was sent to the Island.

If he had had counsel or presented his case properly to the court, he would have won. Hans's rooms, at 343 East Forty-seventh street, the Magistrate would certainly have let him off. Until late at night his wife prowls around the East Side, seizing every stray cat she can find and taking it home with her. She is known as the "katz mutter" all along the East Side, and she takes a good deal of pride in it. Many a time Hans has come home to find a score of cats dining contentedly on meat while there was no supper at all for him.

Despite her desire for alimony, the neighbors say that Mrs. Kaiser has about \$500 in bank.

SHOT HIMSELF IN A HOTEL.

Leopold Fink, a Young Clerk, Found Dead at the Van Twiller—Motive a Mystery.

Leopold E. Fink, a clerk in the office of Paul F. Gerhard & Co., agents for the Lamp and Holt Line at 19 Whitehall street, blew out his brains in the Van Twiller Hotel, Twenty-fifth street and Lexington avenue, early yesterday morning.

Fink was missing from the office Monday. At 10 o'clock that morning he registered at the Van Twiller Hotel, F. C. Craig, Brooklyn.

At 1 o'clock yesterday morning he was found dead. It was a plain case of suicide by shooting. His uncle, George W. Werhan of South Nyack, identified the body.

Paul F. Gerhard, head of the firm, said that young Fink had not appeared at the office since Monday.

"I know no motive," said Mr. Gerhard. "He was a clerk in my office, but I knew him very little. He was not short in his means, and in fact, he was not in a position to take any money."

John W. Gates Better.

TAMTECO, Mexico, March 14.—John W. Gates has been here for the past three days tarrying fishing. He has recovered from the throat affection which troubled him while he was in the City of Mexico.

Court Calendars This Day.

Appellate Division—Supreme Court, Nos. 60, 71, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Supreme Court—Special Term—Part I. Motion matters. Part II. Civil. Motions. Denominations. Nos. 728, 732. Preferred cases—Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part III. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part IV. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part V. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part VI. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part VII. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part VIII. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part IX. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Part X. Civil. Nos. 2507, General calendar—Nos. 1885, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

MAYOR ON STAND IN GAS SUIT.

TESTIFIES THAT OAKLEY AND GROUT ACTED IN GOOD FAITH.

Although He Thought the City Paid Too High for Lighting—Justice Kelly Says the Court Can't Fix the Price of Gas—Argument Over Producing Hooks.

Mayor McClellan, Comptroller GROUT and Commissioner Oakley of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity were the star witnesses yesterday in Congressman's Hearst's suit before Supreme Court Justice Kelly in Brooklyn to restrain the payment of \$1,200,000 of back bills for public lighting to the Consolidated Gas Company and the electric lighting companies.

The Mayor testified that he regarded the price of gas and electric lighting as excessive in this city and that he had talked the matter over with Mr. Oakley several times last April when the subject of new contracts came up. He did not know that the Commissioner had entered into negotiations for new contracts and had thought that nothing was being done in the matter between April and November.

"When I learned that the new contracts had been certified," continued the Mayor, "I sent for Mr. Oakley and he explained in detail just what he had done. He told me that he had done the best he could under the circumstances and I believed him. I believe in fact I know—he was sincere. Nevertheless I questioned him closely, as certain newspapers had stated that his motives in making the contracts were such as to furnish cause for removal."

"After you had investigated the matter, did you not think that Mr. Oakley had acted in bad faith?" asked Lawyer Shearn.

"I certainly did not," replied the Mayor. "Had I known all the circumstances concerning the new contracts he might not have signed them, but I believe that what he did was for the best interests of the city. I have known Mr. Oakley for fifteen years and I have never known him to do a wrong thing."

"Do you believe that Comptroller GROUT also acted in good faith?"

"In the best of faith. My opinion of his action is also based on what I know of him as a man."

"In what way are you trying to prove bad faith on the part of the Mayor?" asked Justice Kelly of Mr. Shearn.

"None of the city's money could have been paid without the approval of the Mayor," replied the lawyer, "and he should have stopped the proposed payment of the bills that were held up. He should have refused to sign the warrant and should have begun an action to annul the contract on the grounds of collusion and bad faith."

"The chief suit is different from any other taxpayer's action I have ever heard of," said the Court. "Suits of this kind are usually brought to prevent city officials from doing some wrong act, not because the Mayor failed to institute a suit to prevent some subordinate from doing a wrong act."

Comptroller GROUT testified that in his opinion Mr. Oakley acted in good faith in signing the contracts. The prices charged for gas and electricity seemed to him excessive then and he still thought the prices unreasonably high. As far as the Mayor was concerned, he was not a party to the settlement, in fact he had nothing to do with the matter at all.